

URGENT ACTION

ISRAA AL-TAWEEL UNDER HOUSE ARREST

Student Israa al-Taweel has been released on health grounds, but is under house arrest and must report to the police every week.

The Cairo Criminal Court ordered the release of **Israa al-Taweel** on 19 December on health grounds. She had been held without charge in pre-trial detention since her arrest on 1 June 2015. She was held for two weeks in conditions of enforced disappearance, while security forces prevented her from contacting her family and officials repeatedly told her family that she was not in detention.

According to her lawyer, the 23-year-old student with a disability has been released from prison but is being kept under house arrest. She is allowed out only for medical treatment and other essential purposes, with police permission. She will also have to report to Cairo's Boulaq al-Dakroul Police Station every week. A court session is supposed to be scheduled 45 days after her release, to decide whether these measures should continue or be cancelled.

It appears that Israa al-Taweel was arrested because she had been socializing with two of her friends, who were wanted by the security forces. These two friends are now facing a military trial. She had been taken on 15 June to the State Security Prosecutor's office in Cairo, and questioned for 18 hours without her lawyer present, over suspicion of charges that included "belonging to a banned group" and "broadcasting false news" as she had been carrying a camera when she was arrested.

Please write immediately in Arabic or your own language:

- Urging the Egyptian authorities to free Israa al-Taweel from house arrest, unless she is charged promptly with a recognizably criminal offence, and given a trial that meets international fair trial standards.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 17 FEBRUARY 2016 TO:

Public Prosecutor

Nabil Sadek
Office of the Public Prosecutor
Madinat Al-Rihab
New Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt
Salutation: Dear Counsellor

President

Abdel Fattah al-Sisi
Office of the President
Al Ittihadia Palace
Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt
Fax: +202 2 391 1441
Email: p.spokesman@op.gov.eg
Twitter: @AlsisiOfficial
Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:

Deputy Assistant Minister of Foreign
Affairs for Human Rights
Mahy Hassan Abdel Latif
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Corniche al-Nil
Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt
Fax: +202 2574 9713
Email: Contact.Us@mfa.gov.eg
Twitter: @MfaEgypt

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the second update of UA 191/15. Further information:
<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde12/2799/2015/en/>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Israa al-Taweel's release from prison on health grounds followed widespread condemnation of her treatment, sparked by a photo of the 23-year-old student crying in the court room of Cairo's Tora Prison Academy last November. Former presidential candidate Ayman Nour tweeted, "#Israa_AlTaweel Thank you for her tears, not because it hurt our hearts, but because it confirmed that we still have hearts, and they hurt".

Egypt's prison authorities were preventing Israa al-Taweel from getting medical treatment that could prevent her disability from becoming permanent. Her family told Amnesty International that the prison doctor diagnosed her in July as having a permanent disability that needed no further treatment. Her family complained several times, but the prison authorities repeatedly refused to grant her medical treatment, saying she was disabled and further treatment would not improve her condition. However, according to medical reports by doctors outside prison, seen by Amnesty International, Israa al-Taweel is suffering from "leg paresis as a result of a gunshot sustained to her lower back that led to laceration of the nervous plexus". The medical report goes on to say that Israa al-Taweel must continue with treatment that includes physiotherapy or she will experience a "collapse in her leg muscle strength".

The Egyptian security forces shot Israa al-Taweel in her lower back on 25 January 2014, at a protest on the third anniversary of the January 2011 uprising that ended former President Hosni Mubarak's rule. She was left unable to walk and used a wheelchair for almost a year. Her condition improved with physiotherapy, and she was able to walk first using crutches, then one crutch and finally just support by her friends. After she was arrested in June 2015, she was denied access to treatment and her condition worsened. She told her family that in custody her condition deteriorated and she asked them to bring back her crutches.

Israa al-Taweel told her family that after she was arrested on 1 June, outside a Cairo restaurant, she was kept blindfolded for 15 days in the National Security office, even when she was using the toilet and while eating. They only removed the blindfold when she went to bed at night. She also said that she could hear people being tortured in the cells near her for the entire 15 days.

The family told Amnesty International that after Israa al-Taweel was subjected to an enforced disappearance, they asked about her in various police stations, including al-Ma'adi and Qasr al-Nil Police Stations in Cairo. They also asked in the headquarters of the prison authorities in Cairo. The authorities denied that she was being held in any police station or prison and told the family that her name was not registered with them. Her family submitted a complaint to the Public Prosecutor on 3 June that she had been subjected to an enforced disappearance. They also complained to the Ministry of Interior's Human Rights Department, which denied that Israa al-Taweel was officially in custody. Eventually, they submitted a report to the National Council for Human Rights, but only found out where she was after she was transferred to al-Qanater Prison on 16 June. Someone who saw her in the prison called the family and told them she was there. Her family went to the prison to see her on 17 June, but the authorities refused to let them, though they did confirm that she was in the prison and in their custody. They were officially allowed to visit her in prison a week later.

Name: Israa al-Taweel
Gender m/f: f

Further information on UA: 191/15 Index: MDE 12/3144/2016 Issue Date: 6 January 2016